

Dunman High School  
Year 4 English 2023  
Socratic Seminar



**SOCRATIC SEMINAR – MIGRATION**

**Essential Questions:**

- **Why do people migrate and what may be some of the implications of this decision?**
- **What are some possible challenges in a country that welcomes migrants? Pay particular attention to the situation in Singapore.**
- **What are some of the ways to integrate into a new country?**

With reference to the attached resource material, as well as your own research, construct a reasoned response on this issue, paying particular attention to the depth, breadth and fair- mindedness of your views.

You are not limited to discussing the essential questions above. You may dig deeper into the issues by asking critical questions to your fellow panelists, or lead the discussion into a specific perspective or angle.

Glossary:

**Emigrate** means you are *exiting* your current homeland:

People are always saying there's no quality of life in Russia, and everyone wants to *emigrate*," he said. (*New York Times*)

**Immigrate** means you are coming in to a country to live:

Citizens from 17 European Union countries were given freedom to *immigrate* to Switzerland in 2007. (*Business Week*)

**Migrate** means to move, like those crazy Monarch butterflies that *migrate* from Canada to Mexico and back. It doesn't have to be a permanent move, but *migrate* is more than a weekend away, and it's not just for butterflies. "Snowbirds" are people who *migrate* south for the winter and come back north when the snow melts, or someone might *migrate* to another part of the country for work or to be closer to family. Here are some examples:

Nevertheless, it has often been assumed that dinosaurs did *migrate*. (*Scientific American*)

People are prepared to travel and *migrate* within America. (*Business Week*)

**In summary:**

*Emigrate* is from the point of view of the departure. Think *exit*.

*Immigrate* is from the point of view of the destination. Think

*come in*. *Migrate* is all about the moving. Think *move*.

<https://www.vocabulary.com/articles/chooseyourwords/emigrate-immigrate-migrate/>

## Exhibit 1:

### Commentary: Behind the brain drain in Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan, stymied aspirations and growing rootlessness

Brain drain is more than an economic issue and there are lessons Hong Kong and Taiwan offer for Singapore, say two observers.

Yew Chiew Ping | Channel News Asia

10 Jun 2018 07:50AM(Updated: 29 Jan 2021 05:18PM)

SINGAPORE: If you think brain drain is a problem that afflicts only developing or less developed countries, think again.

The phenomenon, which refers to the large-scale emigration of educated and high-skilled individuals from their birth country, also exists in OECD countries such as Spain, Ireland and Italy.

Neither are Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore – prosperous economies with a GDP per capita of US\$46,228, US\$24,337 and US\$57,722 respectively in 2017 – immune from brain drain.

In particular, a high percentage of youths in these economies plan to seek greener pastures overseas, albeit for varying reasons.

A 2016 survey conducted by the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) found that 57 per cent of young Hong Kong people aged 18 to 30 had the intention to emigrate, while another survey in Taiwan revealed that 62 per cent of Taiwanese between the age of 20 to 35 planned to seek employment abroad.

Here at home, 42 per cent of young Singaporeans polled by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) in 2010 said that emigration was often on their minds, and 26 per cent were also actively exploring avenues to emigrate.

What lies beneath the seeming disenchantment of youths in these Asian Tigers?

Is this a cause for alarm for the governments of Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore?

## **PUSH AND PULL FACTORS**

The IPS Survey of young Singaporeans showed that alongside social norms such as the positive perception of overseas relocation and the social status of overseas Singaporeans, a perceived lack of upward mobility in Singapore also fuelled the desire to emigrate. 89 per cent of respondents in the Taiwan survey cited low salaries as the key push factor for them to seek employment abroad. Fresh graduates in Taiwan are reportedly paid less than NT\$30,000(S\$1,344) a month.

A lacklustre job market at home, in contrast to the dynamic career opportunities in China, have also driven educated Taiwanese to relocate up north.

Among the roughly 700,000 Taiwanese working outside of Taiwan in 2015, about 60 per cent or 420,000 were in China.

Hong Kong's notorious housing woes have propelled its young people to leave the overcrowded and land scarce city. However, harsh economic realities are not the sole reason for the disillusionment of young Hong Kong people.

**(READ: [Hong Kong's brain drain: Why its young are losing hope and leaving](#))**

According to the CUHK survey, Hong Kong's political malaise has an equally big part to play. 11 per cent of those who intended to relocate said they were unhappy with the government; another 10.3 per cent cited Hong Kong's political and social cleavages as a push factor.

While the youth in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore may face similar economic livelihood challenges, the emerging sense of angst in Hong Kong is different as it also stems partially from the city's socio-cultural outlook under Chinese rule, especially the whittling away of a distinctive Hong Kong identity and culture.

This dreary prospect of identity loss was presented by businessman and Chinese General Chamber of Commerce chairman Jonathan Choi, who recently said: "In the future, we will no longer be Hong Kong people, but Greater Bay Area people," as he urged Hong Kongers to focus on integration with China under the Greater Bay Area plan.

In face of communist China's strong pressure on the city to assimilate, therefore, Hong Kong's youth are naturally anxious about the foreseeable fade-out of their identity and the paradox of living in their birthplace with a sense of rootlessness, or being strangers in their homeland.

## **BRAIN DRAIN IS NOT SIMPLY AN ECONOMIC ISSUE**

For all its negative connotations, brain drain may not necessarily be damaging to the sending country, at least in the economic sense.

For one, the transnational movement of talents is not a one-way flow. This means the economic costs of brain drain may be compensated through government policy that encourages the inflow of high-skilled workers from other economies.

Moreover, local talents who have relocated overseas may also return, where their overseas experience is a boon. The question is if the pull factors are compelling enough to lure these skilled workers back.

Taiwan, with its vibrant democratic culture, is a magnet for young and aspiring Hong Kong emigrants – it is the most preferred destination for 16.3 per cent of Hong Kong youths.

Taiwan's challenge is to revitalise its flagging economy to create more attractive career opportunities for its youths.

Economics aside, governments would be short-sighted to ignore the socio-cultural and political consequences of persistent talent flight over the longer term, particularly its impact on nation-building.

Beijing clearly understands the implications and artfully plays the game to its advantage.

Earlier in April, it unveiled 31 measures to make benefits and opportunities across the strait more accessible for Taiwanese firms and individuals.

If the incentives successfully entice more Taiwanese to settle in China, Taiwan may become further divided as more people favour closer ties with Beijing.

In Hong Kong, while a growing number of people are seeking to leave, 100 to 150 mainland Chinese stream into the city every day on One-Way Permits issued by mainland China.

This population movement will probably transform Hong Kong society over the long term, giving rise to a people more open to influence from Beijing.

Bolstering the Hong Kong identity to retain its young talent, however, is not an option for the Hong Kong administration, as it is likely to be construed by Beijing as a politically-incorrect move promoting "separatism".

In Singapore, where the outflow and inflow of migrants have become a norm, the

Government has increasingly recognised the importance of building a national identity.

On May 18, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office Indranee Rajah said in Parliament that the Singapore identity is “particularly pertinent” in the evolving global landscape, which is witnessing China’s rise, America’s “introspection,” economic shifts brought on by technology and so forth.

She urged young Singaporeans “to help write the next chapter in the country’s history.”

Nation-building is an ongoing process. For young nations like Singapore, the continuing consolidation of a national identity which fosters a strong sense of rootedness, may hold the key to drawing their overseas talent back home someday.

*Reference:*        <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/commentary/brain-drain-hong-kong-taiwan-singapore-aspirations-identity-814581>

## EXHIBIT 2

### COMMENTARY [Singapore](#)

**Commentary: For many overseas Singaporeans thinking of returning, what weighs on their minds?**

**While many Singaporeans are going overseas, many are also coming back. Ivy Low discusses their motivations, opportunities and challenges.**



More than 6,000 Singaporeans attended Singapore Day 2017 in Melbourne. 213,400 Singaporeans have gone overseas as of last year, compared to 157,800 in 2004. (Photo: MCCY)



**[Ivy Low](#)**

23 Sep 2017 05:05PM(Updated: 30 Jan 2021 04:24PM)

SINGAPORE: “I was working in the UK for over a year. But the economy became uncertain after Brexit,” said Jean Ng, a Singaporean associate with an investment bank based in the UK.

It seems alterations in job prospects overseas is one key reason why Singaporeans today are looking to come back home to work.

A commentary on Channel NewsAsia a few weeks ago highlighted that [more Singaporeans are going abroad](#) to seek out new economic opportunities and pursue their passions.

It highlighted that we were seeing a greater inclination towards working and living abroad among younger people, and not necessarily with the aim to migrate permanently.

Indeed, many Singaporeans who have moved overseas are keen to explore coming back after living away for a few years, for a variety of reasons.

## **STEADY STREAM OF RETURNING SINGAPOREANS**

Changes in economic conditions overseas seen in Jean’s story aside, family commitments, especially caring for ageing parents, is often cited as the primary reason for many who return to Singapore.

This was especially true for one Singaporean we met, Bernadine Lee, who had moved to Australia previously.

“After working in Sydney for 16 years, I was keen to return to Singapore to work, to spend more time with my family, especially my elderly parents,” she said.





Singaporeans, including Members of Parliament Teo Ser Luck, Lee Bee Wah and Bae Yam Keng, watch a live telecast of the 2017 Olympic Games in Rio. (Photo: AFP) Singaporeans watch a live broadcast of Joseph Schooling competing in Rio AFP...see more

Families with working spouses find returning to Singapore beneficial as they often have to grapple with challenges with childcare support overseas. High taxes and lack of opportunities due to visa requirements also motivate a few to come back.

### **Other Singaporeans cite more emotional reasons for returning home.**

Often, an affinity to home and Singapore's way of life, accompanied by a desire to contribute back to the nation, motivate them to search for jobs back home.

We have seen a steady stream of overseas Singaporeans keen to return to Singapore in recent years.

Research at Robert Walters found that 82 per cent of overseas Singaporean professionals in our database are open to a move back home, if they can find a suitable job opportunity. Banking and financial services, and sales and marketing were the top two sectors that returning Singaporeans are keen to work in.

### **SINGAPORE'S STANDING AS A COMPETITIVE REGIONAL HUB**

Returning Singaporeans may find plentiful opportunities back here.

Being a key business hub, many multinational companies continue to set up offices in Singapore and looking to use Singapore as a regional base for Southeast Asia.

In January this year, Ogilvy & Mather announced a three-year strategic collaboration with the Economic Development Board, to build up Singapore's capabilities in modern marketing, foster Asia-led innovation in marketing services from its Singapore office and develop a strong pipeline of Singaporean talent.

Singapore is also likely to see continued demand for local IT and digital specialists, as companies focus on improving their IT infrastructure and service platforms for customers.

Singaporeans stand to gain from continual investments in the local economy. Following the implementation of the Fair Consideration Framework, we have seen from our in-depth market analysis and client feedback that employers are increasingly focused on hiring local talent.



File photo of people walking on a street in Singapore. (File photo: Ngau Kai Yan) People crossing a street in Singapore's Central Business District. (File photo: Ngau Kai Yan)

Overseas Singaporeans enjoy a huge advantage within Singapore's job market, even as competition remains stiff. Not only do they add to the numbers of people who can take up new jobs, Singaporeans with overseas working experience often bring with them a global mindset and an in-depth understanding of Singapore's local work culture.

## **CONCERNS ABOUT COMING HOME**

Despite strong reasons to come home, Singaporeans based overseas wrestle with several concerns when deciding to return.

Chief among them are questions about work-life balance and the worry that they may have to struggle with a more hectic pace, especially among those in developed countries such as the US or Australia.

**After spending a period of time living in another country, some also cite the challenges of re-adjusting back culturally.**

This issue is more complicated for some overseas Singaporeans who have found their partners overseas or have families based with them overseas.

To help overcome such concerns, and ease overseas Singaporean professionals back into the local workforce, it would help if companies spoke frankly to candidates to understand what returning Singaporeans want from their employers back home.

Our research shows that the top three factors returning Singaporeans look for in an employment package include good salary increments, a clear career progression and flexible working arrangements.

Companies should also consider assisting with accommodation search and providing time off in the first few weeks when a Singaporean employee moves back home.

These little things go a long way in showing returning Singaporeans they are working for a company that values its employees beyond the bottom line.

*Ivy Low is the International Candidate Manager at Robert Walters (Singapore) who runs the Balik Kampung programme which helps overseas Singaporeans find work opportunities and move back to Singapore.*

### Exhibit 3

Younger and higher-income S'poreans more open towards immigrants: IPS study

Naturalised citizens and permanent residents were more likely to agree that immigrants strengthen cultural diversity. ST PHOTO: KUA CHEE SIONG



Naturalised citizens and permanent residents were more likely to agree that immigrants strengthen cultural diversity. ST PHOTO: KUA CHEE SIONG

Grace Ho

Senior Political Correspondent

PUBLISHED MAR 24, 2021, 5:00 PM SGT

SINGAPORE - Younger Singaporeans, as well as naturalised citizens and permanent residents, view immigrants more positively.

Those with higher education, earning higher salaries or who live in larger housing types are also more positive about the economic impact of immigrants and immigration. But they are less so when it comes to the social and cultural implications, according to a study by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) released on Wednesday (March 24).

In its study, IPS said it is not surprising to find that naturalised citizens and PRs have more positive views of immigration and immigrants, given that they were part of this group themselves.

It added: "(Singaporeans) who were less well-off viewed immigrants as economic and employment threats, while those who were more well-off were more concerned about the social and cultural dimensions."

Some 45.1 per cent of Singaporeans were on the fence regarding the impact of immigrants on Singapore's development - similar to the results found in Taiwan, the United States, Sweden and Switzerland.

This is unlike the more than 40 per cent of Malaysians, Thais and Australians who felt that immigrants had a "quite bad" or "very bad" impact on their country's development.

Naturalised citizens and PRs, as well as younger Singaporeans, were more likely to view the impact positively. They were also more likely to agree that immigrants strengthen cultural diversity.

A total of 60 per cent of those in the youngest group aged 21 to 35 agreed with the statement that immigration helps to fill important job vacancies, compared with just 43 per cent of those older than 65.

Those in the youngest group were more likely to agree that immigration offers people from poor countries a better living, and asylum to political refugees.

While both the social and economic implications of immigration weigh on people's minds, higher proportions are concerned about the impact of immigration on unemployment, said the head of the IPS Social Lab, Dr Mathew Mathews.

While both the social and economic implications of immigration weigh on people's minds, higher proportions are concerned about the impact of immigration on unemployment, said the head of the IPS Social Lab, Dr Mathew Mathews.

He added that this is more apparent for those who are over 50, as well as those who are less educated and have lower incomes. "For these groups, the economic threat weighs more strongly, as they wonder how much more immigration will continue to impact their livelihoods.

"It is inevitable that when people are concerned about immigrants as potential hindrances to their economic well-being, that they will also be more antagonistic to them - and it has social implications."

Only slightly over 46 per cent of those aged 21 to 35 disagreed with the statement that immigration increases the crime rate – this was even lower among each of the other age groups at less than 36 per cent.

Older and locally born citizens wanted stricter limits on the number of foreigners who can enter Singapore.



Around half of Singaporeans aged above 50 also believed immigration increased unemployment for Singapore, compared with 38.4 per cent of those aged between 21 and 35.

Also, the study observed a "notable difference" between locally born citizens, and naturalised citizens and PRs, in their views of whether immigrants cause social conflict.

#### **MORE ON THIS TOPIC**

[Most Singaporeans willing to pay more to firms that improve migrant worker welfare: Study](#)

While 40.3 per cent of locally born citizens agreed that immigration leads to social conflict, only 29.6 per cent of naturalised citizens and PRs agreed with the same statement.

"This diversity of views when it comes to immigration highlights the need for policymaking to consider potential impacts as well as the population's threshold for immigration in lived spaces," said IPS.

"When it comes to policy preferences vis-a-vis immigration, the majority of Singapore respondents are open to foreigners coming into Singapore, but believe that numbers should be within strict limits enforced by the state."

It added that older Singaporeans may be less idealistic than younger ones about immigration, and more concerned that a lack of strict enforcement of immigration quotas would have negative consequences on their livelihoods. "The latter may be a more imperative and immediate concern, when one is settling down in life and starting a family."

#### **MORE ON THIS TOPIC**

[Most S'poreans agree they can learn from immigrants, but feel the group needs to integrate more into society](#)

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/politics/younger-and-higher-income-sporeans-more-open-towards-immigrants-ips-study>

#### Exhibit 4:

#### Move beyond 'us vs them' differences and embrace heritage in building national identity: IPS panel

*Goh Yan Han | Channel News  
Asia 13 Jan 2022, 5:31 pm SGT*

SINGAPORE - Singapore needs to move away from the "us versus them" dichotomy when discussing foreigners, and recognise and accept that its national identity evolves even through immigration and emigration, said Associate Professor Elaine Ho from the National University of Singapore's department of geography.

At the same time, the country has to remember its heritage and use it as a way to promote understanding, said Ms Chang Hwee Nee, chief executive officer of the National Heritage Board, who also noted its potential to be a double-edged sword used to justify exclusivity, familiarity and antagonism.

Both were speakers on a virtual panel on the topic of how being an open cosmopolitan city affects national identity at the Singapore Perspectives conference, organised by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), on Thursday (Jan 13). It was moderated by IPS principal research fellow and head of its social lab Mathew Mathews.

Prof Ho said migration policy is integral to Singapore's cosmopolitanism - both in the attraction of international talent as well as the recruitment of low-skilled migrants to build and support infrastructure. But she also noted that the outflow of Singaporeans who move abroad and return with international exposure is a contributing factor.

She said current debates on the topic of differences tend to assume a Singaporean versus others dichotomy.

But Prof Ho's research has found there are also social divisions within immigrants, such as the earlier cohort of immigrants feeling a greater sense of belonging than newer ones.

"We need to move past the Singaporean versus others dichotomy to consider other aspects of difference-making as well," she said.

In response to a question on whether promoting cultural differences reinforces pride in particular identities and contradicts the notion of developing a national identity, Prof Ho said Singapore's strength lies in its openness to plurality, but the challenge is in reminding Singaporeans of this plurality.

She said: "It's easier to just fall back on what we know rather than recognise that or accept that national identity continues to evolve through migration. "I wouldn't necessarily think of it as a contradiction. It is certainly challenging, but this is precisely what Singapore is. It's a nation in change."

Ms Chang noted that each person has different aspects of identity, and differences naturally lead to tensions and disagreements sometimes.

"But it is these differences that define our cosmopolitanism and in turn our heritage and our collective identity, and that's something worth cultivating," she said.

"So this means that our goal is acculturation, in which different groups maintain their distinct cultural identities while sharing a common sense of rootedness. Our goal is not assimilation, which demands conforming to the same norm," she added.

Ms Chang said heritage is vital in defining national identity in the years ahead.

"Heritage, however, is a double-edged sword. It can be used to justify exclusivity, familiarity and antagonism, as much as it is a way to celebrate diversity, promote understanding as a medium to show that through all these differences, we can be more than the sum of our parts."

But to ensure the role it plays is positive requires sensitivity, understanding and an open mind, she added.

When asked about the relevance of the Chinese-Malay-Indian-Others categorisation in a cosmopolitan Singapore, Prof Ho said it remains relevant as a policy framework, but is one that "at an appropriate juncture, we may want to revisit from time to time to see whether it is still the most appropriate way to manage our social differences in Singapore".

Ms Chang said the question is whether Singapore is better off with or without the categorisation, given that it has served the country well. She added that it is a necessary policy at this point in time.

She noted that France had adopted a racially blind policy, resulting in racially segregated communities, which were clearly not desirable.

"Is it better for us to continue with it or discard it altogether at this point in time? Of course, it's getting more complex, we'll have to update it.

"It's not a perfect policy framework, there are a lot of shortcomings... It continuously needs to be refined, but the challenge is how to do so."



Reference: <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/move-beyond-us-vs-them-differences-and-embrace-heritage-in-building-national-identity-ips-panel>

Other readings:

<https://www.oecd.org/cfe/regionaldevelopment/OECD-migration-local-factsheet.pdf>

Consider this Images:



